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reverence, and his earnest desire for the promotion of the truth and human welfare.

J. H. W. STUCKENBERG.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

ESSAI D'UNE INTRODUCTION À LA DOGMATIQUE PROTESTANTE. Par P. LOBSTEIN, Professeur à la Faculté de Théologie de Strasbourg. Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1896. Pp. 243.

THIS volume of 250 pages from the pen of Professor Lobstein is an eloquent introduction to Protestant dogmatics, as understood and defined by a pronounced Ritschlian. A clearer or better statement of the principles asserted by the Ritschlian school of theology, which has many adherents in Germany and probably not a few in America, we have never met.

In his first chapter Professor Lobstein investigates the traditional sense of the word "dogma" by means of philological, psychological, and historical analysis, and reaches the conclusion that it signifies a belief, defined and formulated officially by competent authority. That authority has been the church, marching hand in hand with the state. History does not authorize us to call every scientific expression of faith a dogma. This term must be reserved for a formula which has acquired legal force in the church and which shares the authority of the church.

In his second chapter Professor Lobstein shows that this traditional sense of the word dogma is absolutely contradictory to the religious principle of Protestantism. Yet he urges the practical necessity of a dogmatic expression of the Protestant faith, and argues that the term may be fitly applied to a scientific statement of the belief of the Protestant church at any given time. It cannot, however, be applied to the creed of an isolated teacher or of a mere school of religious thinkers. For the beliefs of individual teachers or special schools are too capricious, and have too little influence, to merit such a designation.

In his third chapter Professor Lobstein discusses the actual task of Protestant dogmatics. This task, according to the religious principle of the Reformation, consists in a systematic exposition of the faith, of which the gospel is both the foundation and the object. He also examines the points of contact between Protestant dogmatics and Christian faith, and explains the scientific independence and the practical end of Protestant dogmatics, showing how this science contributes to the edification of the church, not by imposing a creed which

rests on external and legal authority, but by expressing scientifically the religious content of the Christian consciousness.

In his fourth chapter Professor Lobstein investigates the source of Protestant dogmatics. This source is commonly supposed to be evangelical faith. Thus in his *Schriftbeweis* Hofman says: "I, the Christian, am the object of study to myself, the theologian." But something more than this is needful. "Suppose an individual having a spiritual nature raised to its highest power, with a consciousness the most delicate and true, having in his soul the richest and most various religious and moral treasures, still you would always feel that he is infinitely below the Christian ideal. No one save the only Son has realized and manifested, in his life and in his death, the perfect moral and religious experience, of which his noblest disciples have caught but glimpses and reproduced but the faintest likeness." Besides, one cannot know how far his consciousness is veritably Christian, without having a criterion independent of his mental states, a type with which he can compare himself, an obligation from which he cannot set himself free.

What, then, is the source from which the faith of a Protestant Christian springs? It is the gospel, the revelation of the grace of God in Jesus Christ, which by its redemptive and sanctifying power inspires confidence in the eternal mercy, with assurance of pardon and sonship by adoption. This is the unique object, the sovereign and permanent principle of Christian faith. The source of dogmatics is the gospel laid hold of by the mysterious power of faith. Experiences, then, are not states of the soul independent of an objective factor which determines them, nor is Christian consciousness an abstract form deprived of all positive content; far from it! Nothing has a right to this beautiful name, except in so far as it draws its nutriment and substance from the fertile soil of evangelical revelation.

In the fifth chapter Professor Lobstein proposes to define the norm of Protestant dogmatics. It is not, he says, the legal authority of confessions of faith. This is the Romanist view, rejected by Protestant orthodoxy. Nor is it the legal authority of Holy Scripture, as traditional orthodoxy affirms. For the doctrine of literal inspiration has been generally and justly abandoned. And with it must be surrendered the doctrinal inerrancy of the Scriptures. Hence, to establish a dogma one must do more than allege a text of Scripture, or even a great number of *dicta probantia*; one must show that it is the authentic translation of the religious experience of Jesus and that its substance is drawn from the gospel, as realized and proclaimed by the Christian community.

In order to do this we must bear in mind that Jews and Greeks borrowed from their intellectual culture or their theological tradition auxiliary theses and corollaries for the explanation of their Christian faith. We must, therefore, beware of exalting the metaphysical formulas, scattered through the New Testament, as well as of trusting implicitly the exegesis of the apostles. For it is illogical to dismiss the hermeneutics of Paul, of Matthew, or of the epistle to the Hebrews, and at the same time retain the speculative formulas of the fourth gospel.

The position of Professor Lobstein in respect to the New Testament does not differ materially from that of Harnack. It may be inferred from the following extracts: "What is the notion of the pre-existence of the Son of God, if not the translation, in the language of the time, of the religious value of the personality of Christ, the eternally predestined organ of the divine will, the perfect revealer of an inviolable holiness and an infinite love, and the founder of the kingdom which the Father has prepared for his chosen from the foundation of the world? (Matt. 25: 34.) What is the notion of the miraculous birth of Jesus, if not the popular and symbolical expression of a truth of Christian experience, namely, that the divine life, incarnated in Christ and communicated by him, came from a divine source, . . . that the Son of God was very really a new creation, the chief of a humanity 'which is rooted in heaven,' the second Adam born of God and living in God? And what is faith in his resurrection, if not the victorious and immovable assurance that the Lord is living, that the death of the crucified One was not the last word of his saving mission, but rather the starting point and indispensable condition of an imperishable work, that the spirit of holiness, an essential factor of the terrestrial personality of Jesus, has unfolded itself perfectly in the glorified Lord, so that his action is no longer subject to the conditions of time and space, but he is now more nearly present to his own than he was during the days of his earthly and historic ministry?"

The bearing of all this upon the obvious teaching of Scripture is too evident to require comment. Under such treatment many a doctrine of the Lutheran church and of all evangelical churches would disappear; that is, if we understand the purport of Professor Lobstein's language in these extracts from the sixth chapter of his treatise.

In the same chapter he also explains the connection between dogmatics and philosophy, affirming and limiting the anatomy of each over against the other. Yet he admits that indifference to philosophy is impossible to a Protestant dogmatician. For a dogmatic system can-

not be constructed which does not rest on some theory of knowledge. And the best theory yet propounded is that contained in the philosophical writings of Kant; especially in his distinction between pure and practical reason. Religious knowledge belongs exclusively to the domain of practical reason. It is valuable to us, not because it gives us correct ideas of God, but because it gives us ideas better fitted to do us good than, perhaps, the very truth itself, which transcends our capacity.

All the ordinary arguments for the being of God are, therefore, rejected. Only by faith in Christ can one have valid reason to believe in God. What, then, must be said of men living before the time of Christ, or, indeed, since his time in pagan lands? We prefer the doctrine of the psalmist that the heavens declare the glory of God, and of the apostle that his eternal power and divine nature are to be seen in the things that have been made. The fullest and clearest revelation of God may be found, no doubt, in Jesus Christ, but to assume that the only revelation has been made in him is inconsistent with the religious history of mankind, as well as with the words of Jesus concerning God's relation to nature. The flowers of the field and the birds of heaven had lessons for him of the Father's care; why not for us?

Our criticism of the Ritschlian view of Protestant dogmatics, as luminously expounded in this volume, may be summarized as follows: First, the sources of Christian truth are too restricted. More account should be taken of the self-revelation of God to those who lived before the coming of Christ. Secondly, speculative philosophy is depreciated, yet the whole scheme of dogmatics is made to rest upon philosophy. Thirdly, the Ritschlian party in the Lutheran church seems to be conceived of as embracing the whole Protestant church. Fourthly, the gospel records are treated with less respect than they deserve.

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**DIE CHRISTLICHE LEHRE VON DER SÜNDE.** Eine Untersuchung zur systematischen Theologie. Von LIC. DR. CARL CLEMEN, Privatdozent an der Universität Halle-Wittenberg. Erster Teil. *Die biblische Lehre.* Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1897. Pp. vi + 272. M. 6.

THE author undertakes the treatment of the subject of the Christian doctrine of sin not without a clear conception of the difficulty of the